CLAIMS

1-4. (Previously canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) [The] A method of producing a xanthan composition comprising a population of xanthan molecules having a range of molecular lengths wherein at least 5 % of the population has a length of at least 3 um as measured by atomic force microscopy, comprising: selectively increasing the amount of gene product of wild type *gumB* and wild type *gumC*, in a *Xanthomonas campestris* culture, wherein multiple copies of said wild type *gumB* and wild type *gumC* are present but without multiple copes of *orfX, gumD, gumE, gumF*, and *gumG*. ~~said gene product of gumB, and said gene product of gumC but not of orfX and not of a gene selected from the group consisting of gumD, *gumE, gumF,and* gumG in a *Xanthomonas campestris* XWCM1/pBBR5BC) culture.~~

6-38 (Previously Cancelled)

39. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a xanthan polymer preparation having increased viscosity relative to that produced by a [[wild-type]] strain not having amplified genes *gumB* and *gumC*, comprising:
selectively increasing the amount of gene product of wild-type *gumB* and the gene product of wild-type *gumC*, ~~said gene product of *gumB* and said gene product of *gumC*,~~ but not selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *orfX* and not selectively increasing the amount of gene product of a gene selected from the group consisting of *gumD, gumE, gumF and gumG* in a *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~(XWCM1/pBBR5BC) culture~~, whereby a higher viscosity xanthan polymer preparation is produced by the culture.

40. (Currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein the step of selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *gumB* and *gumC* is performed by introducing into the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ one or more additional copies of *gumB* and *gumC*.

41. (Currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein the step of selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *gumB* and *gumC* is performed by

introducing into the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ one or more additional copies of *gumB* and *gumC* but not selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *gumD, gumE, gumF, and gumG.*

42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein the step of selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *gumB* and *gumC* is performed by introducing into the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ one or more additional copies of *gumB* and *gumC* but not selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *orfX* and not selectively increasing the gene product of *gumD, gumE, gumF* and *gumG.*

43. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the additional copies are on an extrachromosomal genetic element.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43 wherein the extrachromosomal genetic element is a plasmid.

45. (Original) The method of claim 44 wherein the plasmid is a broad host range plasmid.

46. (Currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein the additional copies are integrated in the genome of the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ .

47. (Previously amended) The method of claim 39 wherein the step of selectively increasing the amount of gene product of *gumB* and *gumC* is performed by inducing *gumB* and *gumC* expression using an inducible promoter and an inducing agent which increases expression from the inducible promoter.

48. (Original) The method of claim 39 further comprising the step of recovering the higher viscosity xanthan polymer from the preparation.

49. (Original) The method of claim 39 further comprising the step of precipitating xanthan polymer from the higher viscosity xanthan polymer preparation.

50. (Currently amended) A method of producing a xanthan polymer preparation having increased viscosity relative to that produced by a ~~wild-type~~ *Xanthomonas campestris* strain not having multiple copies of *gumB* and *gumC*, comprising:

culturing a *Xanthomonas campestris* ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ strain in a culture medium under conditions in which it produces a xanthan polymer, wherein the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ selectively produces more ~~gene product of *gumB* and *gumC*, said~~ gene product of *gumB*, and ~~said~~ more gene product of *gumC*, but not of *orfX* and not of a gene selected from the group consisting of ~~*gumD*, *gumG*~~ *gumD, gumE, gumF*, and *gumG* relative to a wild-type strain.

51. (Currently amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ has more than one copy of *gumB* and *gumC* per copy of *gumD*.

52. (Previously Cancelled)

53. (Currently amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ has more than one copy of *gumB* and *gumC* per copy of a gene selected from the group consisting of *gumD, gumE, gumF, and gumG.*.

54. (Currently amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ has more than one copy of *gumB* and *gumC* per copy of *orfX*.

55. (Currently amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ has more than one copy of *gumB* and *gumC* per copy of *orfX* and of *gumD, gumE, gumF, and gumG*.

56. (Currently amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the *Xanthomonas campestris* strain ~~XWCM1/pBBR5BC~~ carries one or more plasmids which in aggregate carry at least one copy of *gumB* and *gumC*.

57. (Original) The method of claim 50 further comprising the step of recovering a higher viscosity xanthan polymer from the culture medium.

58. (Original) The method of claim 50 further comprising the step of precipitating xanthan polymer from the culture medium.

59-63. (Previously Cancelled)